

From: Multiple Senders
Sent: Thursday, September 30, 2010
To: BRC
Subject: BRC: Stop making radwaste; start taking scientifically-sound decisions

Dear Commission members

As part of International Action Day on Radioactive Waste, I wanted to share some of my recommendations for U.S. radioactive waste policy:

STOP MAKING IT = GOOD The 20th Century did not demonstrate that radioactive waste can be isolated from the cycles of Living Earth for the period of time that it will be hazardous. It did demonstrate that reprocessing of irradiated nuclear fuel is a proliferation threat. I have worked toward ending the industrial scale production of this waste from military and from civilian energy activities as the only rational response to material that has the potential: to be used for thousands of bombs if reprocessed and to burden future generations with material that will remain risky literally for eons. The only "solution" to radioactive waste is to stop making more of it.

STOP YUCCA = GOOD I support the decision to end the Yucca Mountain program. It is clear from empirical data that the site is a poor one since it is an oxidizing, unsaturated environment, since it will leak radioactive gases and over time radioactivity would pollute the groundwater in the region, which is the only local source of water supply there, as well as the potential for volcanic redistribution of the waste.

STOP ENLARGING THE MESS = GOOD I oppose reprocessing (separation of plutonium) since it does not meet the goal of isolation of radioactivity from our environment and instead results in the substantial expansion of volume to be disposed of in a repository. In addition, reprocessing by definition leads to further production of more radioactive waste if the plutonium is reused. It is also not rational to introduce even more plutonium – a nuclear weapons usable material -- into commerce in an age when nuclear proliferation by state and non-state parties is a serious security threat.]

GO TO HOSS = GOOD Finally, I call upon the Blue Ribbon Commission to heed the request which originates from communities where radioactive waste is stored now (around nuclear power reactors and nuclear weapons sites). I recommend that regulations be changed to require the hardening of waste storage for greater security and safety including: mandatory dry storage in containers (after 5 years) that have earth berms around each one; increased monitoring of each container for radiation, heat and security; greater participation of the local host community. See the Principles for Safeguarding Nuclear Waste at Reactor Sites http://brc.gov/e-mails/May10/HOSS_PRINCIPLES_3_23_2010x.pdf also known as Hardened Onsite Storage or HOSS.

Given the immense difficulty, expense, and risk of waste with vast amounts of plutonium in it, it is prudent to stop making more – a finite and limited time and amount in the pipeline will further the chances of increasing safety and security in the management of the waste that we already have. A scientifically based program focused on demonstration of the isolation of these wastes from the biosphere should be your goal.

Thank you,